

ARC Guide for Educators and Students

<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/education/>

The guide introduces educators and students to the National Archives' Archival Research Catalog (ARC). Searching in ARC to learn more about National Archives' historical documents could enrich a classroom activity, a homework assignment, or a research project.

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Dorothy E. Davis, et. al. vs. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia, 1951? (ARC ID 279100)

Part 1: ARC in the Classroom

Bring variety to your classroom by teaching with primary documents – the raw materials of history. Your students can learn about history firsthand using the primary sources held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). NARA has billions of pieces of paper and millions of photographs that document the working of the Federal Government and U.S. history.

ARC is NARA's online door to the Archives. Educators and students can use ARC to locate records found in our various facilities nationwide and view digital images of some of these records. ARC contains descriptions of records created by Federal agencies, Congress, and Presidential administrations as well as records created by people and sent to the government.



ARC: A Work in Progress

Currently just over 47% of our records are described in ARC. Every two weeks new descriptions are placed in ARC. If you do not find the records you are seeking, please contact the NARA office that holds those records. Read more about: [Why aren't all Federal Archived Records Online?](#)

Handouts for Classroom Use

For Educators	For Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC Brochure for Educators and Students (PDF) • ARC Web Tips (PDF or Word) • (Printable version of this guide): ARC Guide for Educators and Students (PDF or Word) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC Brochure for Educators and Students (PDF) • Anatomy of the ARC Basic Search Screen (PDF or Word) • Anatomy of an ARC Series Description (PDF or Word)

ARC and NARA's Teaching With Documents Lesson Plans

You can search in ARC for copies of documents used in NARA's Teaching With Documents lesson plans.¹ Lesson plans are available on various topics, arranged by period in U.S. history. Please note that not all documents used in the lesson plans have been entered into ARC. "Teaching With Documents" is just one part of NARA's online resources for Educators and Students.²

- **Continue Your Research in ARC:** The records you find in the Teaching With Documents lesson plans can be a starting point for both educators and students. Students can search in ARC to find historical records for a special research paper or a National History Day³ project.
- **Example: Civil Rights:** You plan to use the Teaching With Documents lesson plan Court Documents Related to Martin Luther King, Jr., and Memphis Sanitation Workers⁴ in your classroom. Introduce your students to ARC with the following tasks. (Review the Search Tips in Part 2 of this guide on ARC's search options.)
 1. Show the class how to look up the lesson plan's first document in ARC by typing the ARC ID number **279325** into the keywords box.
 2. Search broadly in ARC with the keywords **Civil Rights** and browse through the results. (Always set your search hit limit to 2,000 to see the maximum number of hits.)
 3. Search more narrowly in ARC with the keywords **Civil Rights Act** and browse.
 4. Refine your search by again searching with the keywords **Civil Rights Act** and adding the **Digital Objects Filter** to retrieve only ARC descriptions that have digital images attached. Selected pages from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are available as digital images attached to ARC ID 299891.

Did you know?

You can type just an ARC ID number into the ARC keywords box to retrieve that one ARC description.



For example, **ARC ID: 524642** (Camp scene. Showing winter huts and corduroy roads, ca. 1860 - ca. 1865) is featured in Teaching With Documents: The Civil War as Photographed by Mathew Brady.
<<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brady-photos/>>

Anatomy of an ARC Series Description

Example ARC Search Results: Hit #1 of 65

65 hit(s) retrieved for keywords "nasa" with filters applied.

See Hierarchy Printer-Friendly Link to Search Results Refine Search

Jump to Hit 1 Go

ARC Identifier: 606261

Title: Correspondence, 1967 - 1970

Creator: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Flight Crew Operations Division, (1962 - 1971) (Most Recent)

Type of Archival Materials: Textual Records

Level of Description: Series from Record Group 255: Records of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1903 - 2002

Location: NARA's Southwest Region (Fort Worth) (NRFFA), 501 West Felix Street, Building 1, Fort Worth, TX 76115-3405 PHONE: 817-831-5620, FAX: 817-334-5621, EMAIL: ftworth.archives@nara.gov

Inclusive Dates: 1967 - 1970

Part of: Record Group 255: Records of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1903 - 2002

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope & Content Note: This series includes official copies of letters and memoranda sent to other Manned Spacecraft Center (MSC) units, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Headquarters, other NASA Centers, and contractors. The correspondence relates to crew training and equipment, spacecraft hardware, simulations and training plans and schedules, flight procedures, flight experiments, contractor support, and general administrative matters.

Access Restrictions: Unrestricted

Use Restrictions: Unrestricted

Variant Control Number(s): Local Identifier: 154W5

Copy 1

Copy Status: Preservation-Reproduction-Reference

Extent: 2 linear feet, 7 linear inches

Count: 6 Letter Archives Box, Standard

Storage Facility: NARA's Southwest Region (Fort Worth, TX)

Media

Media Type: Paper

The Title is the name assigned to the records. It explains what they are. Here, we have letters, or correspondence.

The ARC Identifier number is unique. You could put 606261 in the ARC keywords search box to retrieve this one description.

The Creator made or organized the records. Here, it is a division of NASA. Sometimes, there are several creators.

Location info tells you where the records are kept and how to get in touch with the staff there. This series is at Fort Worth, TX.

Inclusive Dates tell you when the creator made these records. Here, NASA created these letters between 1967 and 1970.

Scope and Content Note explains what the records are and what they're about. This series is letters sent and received by a part of NASA.

Level of Description tells you if you are reading about a Record Group, Collection, Series, File Unit, or Item. Here we have a Series in Record Group 255.

```

graph TD
    RG[Record Group] --> S[Series]
    C[Collection] --> S
    S --> FU[File Unit]
    FU --> I[Item]
    CR[Creator] --> S
  
```

Levels in ARC:

- Record Groups and Collections contain Series.
- Series contain File Units or Items.
- File Units contain Items.

- Read more about the [Record Group](#)⁵ and [Series](#)⁶ concepts.

Part 2: Search Tips for Educators and Students

Anatomy of the ARC Basic Search Screen

The screenshot shows the NARA ARC Basic Search interface. Annotations include:

- Top Bar:** NARA logo and the tagline "...ready access to essential evidence...". A [Help](#) link is in the top right.
- Search Input:** A text box for "Enter any keyword or exact phrase and press Go." Below it is a link to "Search for descriptions of Archival Materials containing the following keyword(s):".
- Buttons:** "Go" and "Clear" buttons are next to the search input. An "Advanced Search" button is below them.
- Limit Results:** Radio buttons for "100", "1000", and "2000".
- Filter Your Search:**
 - ☐ [Descriptions of Archival Materials linked to digital copies](#)
 - [Archival materials dated between](#) MM DD YYYY [and](#) MM DD YYYY
 - [Location of Archival Materials:](#)
 - All Locations
 - Cartographic and Architectural Records LICON, Special Media Archives S...
 - Center for Legislative Archives
 - Civilian Records LICON, Textual Archives Services Division
 - [Type of Archival Materials:](#)
 - All Types
 - Architectural and Engineering Drawings
 - Artifacts
 - Data Files
- Annotations:**
 - Green boxes point to the search input, the "Filter Your Search" section, and the "Type of Archival Materials" dropdown.
 - Yellow boxes point to the "Search Tips" link, the "Help" link, and the "Advanced Search" button.

ARC allows you to search in various ways for federal records.

Keyword

The keyword search in ARC searches most fields in the archival descriptions. Search for multiple keywords at the same time by using the words:

- AND
- OR
- NOT

For example, search for **baseball or softball** to find descriptions with either keyword in them.

Digital Copies

ARC has thousands of digital copies (or digital images) in the catalog. To search only for descriptions linked to digital images, check the box next to "Descriptions of Archival Materials linked to digital copies."

Time-Saving Tips: Digital Copies Search

1. Always select the **2000 hit limit** to get the maximum results.
2. Click **digital copies filter** for search results with thumbnail images.
3. Click **printer-friendly version button** on the first Digital Copies Search Results page to see all of your hits on one screen for browsing. Note the ARC IDs for the images you want to research further.

See [Historical Documents Online: Search Hints for Selected Topics in ARC⁷](#) for a list of the topics featured.

ARC Basic Search

Search for [descriptions of Archival Materials](#) containing the following keyword(s):

Limit Results to ☒ 100 ☐ 1000 ☐ 2000

Filter Your Search:

☐ [Descriptions of Archival Materials](#) linked to [digital copies](#)

[Archival materials dated](#) between MM DD YYYY and MM DD YYYY

[Search Tips](#)

Dates

This filter allows you to narrow your search by means of the dates associated with the archival materials.

The Date Range consists of two sets of date boxes. You may enter a date to search for in either or both. ARC will find descriptions of materials that fall within that range.

Inclusive v. Coverage Dates

Often you will see descriptions with two sets of dates: inclusive dates and coverage dates. **Inclusive dates** are the dates that the records were created. **Coverage dates** are the dates of the time period that the records document.

For example, the War Department began creating individual service files for Revolutionary War soldiers in 1890. The inclusive or creation dates for these records are 1890-1913, the dates that the War Department was creating the records. The coverage dates are 1775-1781, the dates of the Revolutionary War.

Filter Your Search:

☐ [Descriptions of Archival Materials](#) linked to [digital copies](#)

[Archival materials dated](#) between MM DD YYYY and MM DD YYYY

[Location of Archival Materials:](#)

All Locations
 Cartographic and Architectural Records LICON, Special Media Archives S...
 Center for Legislative Archives
 Civilian Records LICON, Textual Archives Services Division

Location

You can filter a keywords search to only return descriptions of records *available* at a specific National Archives location. Type your keywords into the box and select any location from the filter list. In the example below, we searched for records related to the Apollo space missions held by NARA's Southwest Region in Fort Worth, Texas. (If, instead, you are interested in finding records *about* a particular state or region, try putting the name into the keywords box.)

1. Press the Yellow **Search** button in the upper left corner of this page to go to the Basic search screen.
2. Type the words **Apollo** in the **Keywords** box.
3. Select the limit results radio button for 2000.
4. Select the locations filter marked **NARA's Southwest Region (Fort Worth)**.
5. Press the **Go** button.
6. When hits are returned for your search, view the full result of your hit by selecting the **Title link**.

Example

ARC Basic Search

Search for descriptions of Archival Materials containing the following keyword(s):

apollo

Limit Results to ☐ 100 ☐ 1000 ☒ 2000

Filter Your Search:

☐ Descriptions of Archival Materials linked to digital copies

Archival materials dated between MM DD YYYY and MM DD YYYY

Location of Archival Materials:

NARA's Southeast Region (Atlanta)
NARA's Southwest Region (Fort Worth)
 National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park Archives (an affiliat...
 Nixon Presidential Materials Staff

Type of Archival Materials:

All Types
 Architectural and Engineering Drawings
 Artifacts
 Data Files

[Search Tips](#)

Go **Clear**

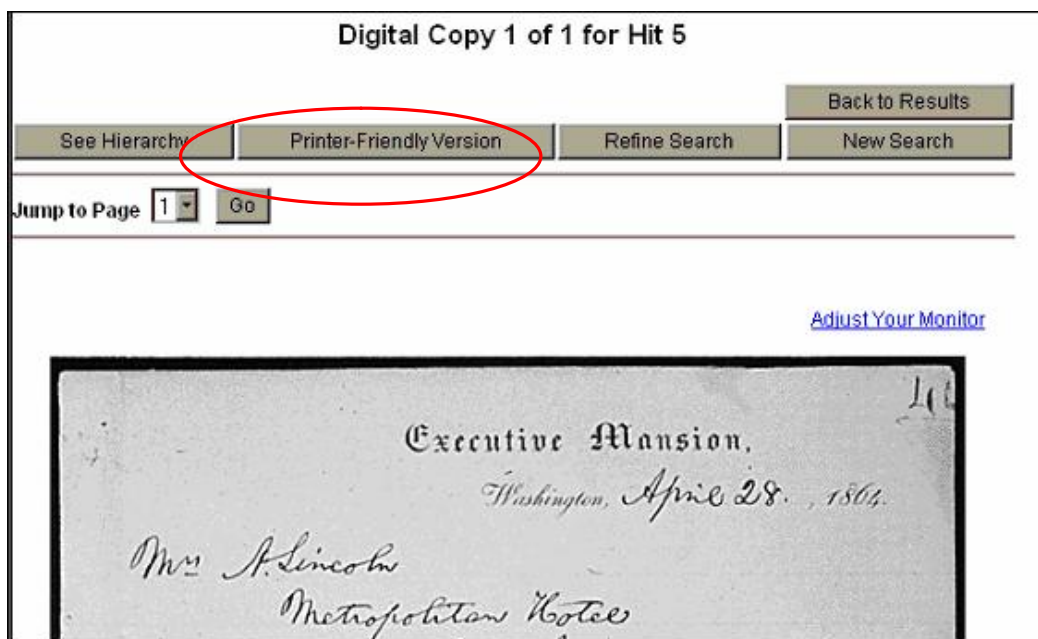
Advanced Search

- **More Search Tips:** [How to Search in ARC](#)⁸

Part 3: Printing, Downloading, and Ordering Records Found in ARC

Printing from ARC

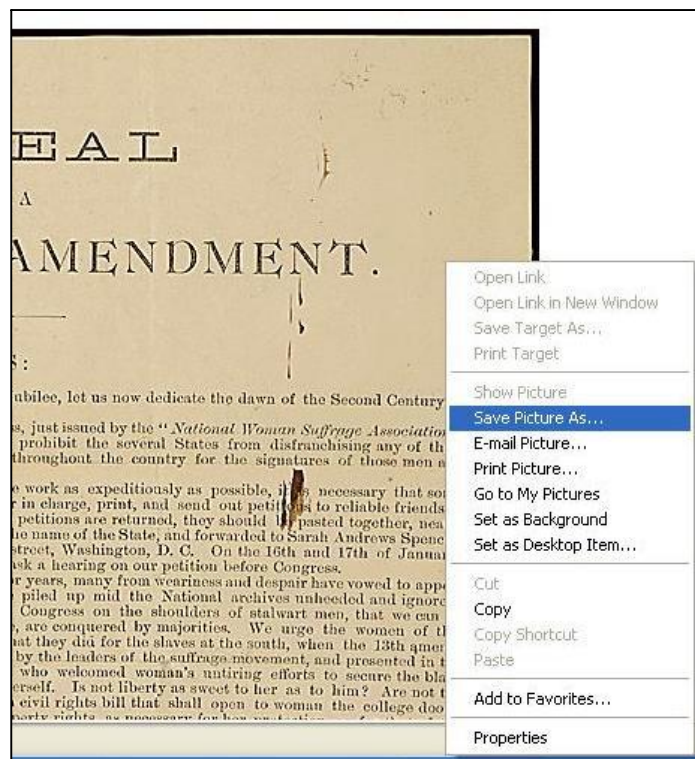
Descriptions and images found in ARC can be printed. You can also print out your list of search results; this is very useful for viewing hundreds of thumbnail image search results on one page. Click on the Print Friendly Version Button at the top of the screen and then use the print function on your computer.



Downloading Images

Both the thumbnail (small) and larger images in ARC can be saved to your computer or onto a disc or CD-rom.

1. Right Click on the image.
2. Click on Save Picture As.
3. A window with options for where you would like to save the image on your computer will appear. (You may assign a new filename to the image. We recommend changing the file name to the ARC ID number so you can match it up with the description later.)
4. Click OK.
5. Open the file folder or drive where you saved the file and double click on the file.
6. Or open a photo editor or an Internet browser and select Open from the File menu. Browse for the file and double click on it to open it in the viewer.



Check under the **Use Restrictions** listed in the ARC description. **Restrictions**⁹ may apply to the materials, based on copyright or other use restrictions. Read information about Publication of Photographs Furnished by Still Pictures¹⁰, particularly the section on Crediting the National Archives¹¹.



[Large image \(464748 Bytes\)](#)

Creator:	U.S. House of Representatives. Committee on the Judiciary. (06/03/1813 -) (Most Recent)
Type of Archival Materials:	Textual Records
Level of Description:	Item from Record Group 233: Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789 - 2005
Location:	Center for Legislative Archives (NWL), National Archives Building, Room 8E, 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20408 PHONE: 202-501-5350, FAX: 202-219-2176, EMAIL: inquire@nara.gov
Production Date:	11/10/1876
Part of:	Series: Petitions and Memorials, 1813-1968
Access Restrictions:	Unrestricted
Use Restrictions:	Unrestricted
Specific Records Type:	petitions

Citing Records

NARA's General Information Leaflet 17: Citing Records in the National Archives of the United States¹² covers how to cite NARA records of various levels of description and various media formats. Your students should refer to the leaflet when citing NARA records in their papers.

Ordering Records Found in ARC

If you would like to receive copies of any records you find described in ARC you can either request copies for a fee or visit NARA.

- **Ordering Copies:** For more information on ordering photocopies please go to our [Obtaining Copies of Records](#) page.
- **Contacting NARA:** If you have further questions about records you find in ARC, the location and contact information is available in the ARC description in the location field. The unit's name, address, phone number, fax number, and preferred email address appear. You may send an email to inquire@nara.gov with general questions about NARA.
- **Visiting NARA for Research:** You can visit the location listed in each description to see the records. Instead, you can contact that location to arrange for copies of the records. Allow at least 48 hours for offices to retrieve records that are stored off site. For more information on visiting our facilities please go to our [Planning Your Research Visit](#) page.
- **Visiting NARA with Your Students:** See more information about [visiting the National Archives Experience](#)¹³ and [bringing your class to visit the National Archives in Washington, DC](#)¹⁴. No chance of making a trip to Washington, DC, anytime soon? NARA's [Regional Archives](#)¹⁵ and [Presidential Libraries](#)¹⁶, located around the country, welcome school groups.

Endnotes (URLs)

- ¹ <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/>
- ² <http://www.archives.gov/education/>
- ³ <http://www.nationalhistoryday.org/>
- ⁴ <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/>
- ⁵ <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/index-numeric/concept.html>
- ⁶ <http://www.archives.gov/research/start/how-records-grouped.html>
- ⁷ <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/>
- ⁸ <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/how-to-search.html>
- ⁹ <http://www.archives.gov/research/order/restrictions.html>
- ¹⁰ <http://www.archives.gov/research/formats/publication-of-photos.html>
- ¹¹ <http://www.archives.gov/research/formats/publication-of-photos.html#credit>
- ¹² <http://www.archives.gov/publications/general-info-leaflets/17.html>
- ¹³ <http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/visit/visit.html>
- ¹⁴ http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/visit/visit_groups.html
- ¹⁵ <http://www.archives.gov/locations/regional-archives.html>
- ¹⁶ <http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/visit/>